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DOCUMENTS

Concerning the Last Phase

of the

German-Polish Crisis

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Note on the German White Book

The German White Book, presented herewith, is a collection of official documents and speeches, not a collection of uncontrollable conversations. It does not pretend to cover the entire field of German-Polish relations but, as the title implies, concerns itself solely with the last phase of the German-Polish crisis, from August 4th to September 3rd, 1939.

The Polish-German controversy concerning the Corridor, Upper Silesia and Danzig, began in 1919; it has never, since the signing of the Versailles Treaty, ceased to agitate Europe. For many years intelligent commentators and statesmen of all nations, including Great Britain, agreed that the separation of East Prussia from the Reich and, indeed, the whole Polish settlement, was unjust and fraught with danger.

Germany, again and again, made attempts to solve the differences between the two countries in a friendly spirit. It was only when all negotiations proved vain and Poland joined the encirclement front against Germany, that Chancellor Hitler cut the Gordian knot with the sword. It was England that forced the sword into his hand.

Great Britain asserts in her Blue Book and elsewhere that she was compelled to "guaranty" Poland against "aggression" for reason of international morality. Unfortunately the British Government subsequently admitted (Under-Secretary of State Butler, House of Commons, October 19, 1939) that the "guaranty" was aimed solely against Germany. It was not valid in case of conflicts with other powers. In other words, the British "guaranty" was merely a link in the British encirclement chain. The Polish crisis was deliberately manufactured by Great Britain with the connivance of Poland; it was the fuse designed to set off the explosion!

Great Britain naturally attempts to becloud this fact. Official British statements on the outbreak of the war place great emphasis on the allegation that England did not give a formal "guaranty" to Poland until March 31, 1939, whereas the German demand on Poland, which Poland rejected, was made on March 21st. Britain contends that the British "guaranty" was merely the consequence of the German demand of March 21st.

Britain denies that her "guaranty" stiffened Polish resistance. She insists that Germany took advantage of a moment of highly strained international tension by springing upon Poland her demand for an extra-territorial road through the Corridor between the Reich and East Prussia.

The British ignore a vital fact in this connection. The existence of the "guaranty", not its formal announcement, was the decisive factor. The future may reveal when the British promise was first dangled before Poland. In any event, Poland was assured of British aid *before* March 21st.

Chamberlain's speech of March 17, 1939, and the statement by Lord Halifax of March 20th, (both reprinted in the British Blue Book) leave no doubt on that question. The British "guaranty" was in the nature of a blank check. Poland did not know when she marched to her doom, that the check would not be honored.

The allegations that the Poles were surprised or overwhelmed by the German proposals, does not hold water. Poland was fully informed of the German demands. When, as Herr von Ribbentrop points out in his Danzig speech (October 24, 1939) Chancellor Hitler in 1934 concluded a Friendship and Non-Aggression Pact with Marshal Pilsudski, it was clearly understood that the problem of Danzig and the Corridor must be solved sooner or later. Chancellor Hitler hoped that it would be solved within the framework of that instrument.

Poland callously disregarded her obligations under the German-Polish Pact, after the death of Marshal Pilsudski. The persecution of German minorities in Poland, Poland's measures to strangle Danzig economically, the insolent manner the Polish Government chose to adopt with the British blank check in its pocket and the Polish mobilization frustrated Chancellor Hitler's desire to settle Polish-German differences by peaceful negotiation, as he had solved every other problem arising from the bankruptcy of statesmanship at Versailles.

No one can affirm that the National Socialist Government did not attempt with extraordinary patience to impress upon Poland the desirability of a prompt and peaceful solution. The Polish Government was familiar with the specific solution proposed by Chancellor Hitler since October 24, 1938. The nature of the German proposals was discussed at least four times between the two governments before March 21, 1939.

On October 24, 1938, von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, proposed to the Polish Ambassador, Lipski, four steps to rectify the injustice of Versailles and to eliminate all sources of friction between the two countries.

1). The return of the Free City of Danzig to the Reich, without severance of its economic ties to the Polish State. (The arrangement vouchsafed to Poland free port privileges and extra-territorial access to the harbor.)

2). An exterritorial route of communication through the Corridor by rail and motor to reunite Germany and East Prussia.

3). Mutual recognition by the two States of their frontiers as final and, if necessary, a mutual guaranty of their territories.

4). The extension of the German-Polish Pact of 1934 from ten to twenty-five years.

On January 5, 1939, Poland's Foreign Minister, Josef Beck, conferred with the German Chancellor on the problems involved. At this time Chancellor Hitler offered Beck a clear and definite guaranty covering the Corridor, on the basis of the four points outlined by von Ribbentrop. The following day, January 6th, at Munich, the German Foreign Minister once more confirmed Germany's willingness to guaranty, not only the Corridor, but all Polish territory.

The generous offer for a settlement along these lines, liquidating all friction between the two countries, was reiterated when Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop paid a state visit to Warsaw (January 23rd to 27th, 1939). On that occasion von Ribbentrop again offered a guaranty of the Polish-German boundaries and a final all-inclusive settlement of German-Polish relations.

Under the circumstances it is absurd to allege that Poland was "surprised" by the German proposal of March 21st, and subsequent developments. It is possible that Poland may have concealed Germany's friendly and conciliatory offers from Paris and London. With or without British promptings, Poland prepared the stage for a melodramatic scene, in which the German villain brutally threatened her sovereignty and her independence.

In spite of Polish intransigence, culminating in threats of war, Chancellor Hitler made one more desperate attempt to prevent the conflict. He called for a Polish pleni-potentiary to discuss the solution presented in Document 15 of the German White Book. This solution envisaged the return of Danzig to the Reich, the protection of Polish and German minorities, a plebiscite in the Corridor under neutral auspices, safeguarding, irrespective of the result, Poland's unimpeded exterritorial access to the sea.

The British are pleased to describe this reasonable document as an "ultimatum". This is a complete distortion of the facts. The German Government, it is true, had set a time-limit (August 30th) for the acceptance of its proposal, but it waited twenty-four hours after its expiration before concluding that the possibilities of diplomatic negotiations had been exhausted. There was ample opportunity for England and Poland to act within those twenty-four hours.

The British take the position that Germany's demands were not known either in Warsaw or London. That pretense is demolished by the British Blue Book itself, for we find here a dispatch from Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador to Berlin, which leaves no doubt that he relayed the German proposal to London after his

midnight conference with von Ribbentrop on August 30th, and that he understood the essential points of the German proposal. Henderson even transmitted to the British Government Chancellor Hitler's assurance that the Polish negotiator would be received as a matter of course on terms of complete equality with the courtesy and consideration due to the emissary of a sovereign state.

Henderson sent his night message not only to Downing Street, but also to the British Embassy in Warsaw. There is evidence, which has recently come into the possession of the German Foreign Office that, in spite of all its protestations of ignorance and helplessness, the British Cabinet communicated the substance of Henderson's midnight conversation with the German Foreign Minister directly to the Polish Government. The London *Daily Telegraph*, in a late edition of August 31st, printed the following statement: "At the Cabinet Meeting yesterday, at which the terms of the British Note were approved, it was decided to send a message to Warsaw, indicating the extent of the latest demands from Berlin for the annexation of territory." This item appeared only in a few issues. It was suppressed in later editions.

Germany's demands were so reasonable that no sane Polish Government would have dared to reject them. They certainly would have been accepted if England had advised moderation. There was one more chance to preserve peace on September 2nd. It was offered by a message from Premier Mussolini (Document 20). The Italian suggestion was acceptable to Germany and France (Document 21), but was rejected by Great Britain (Document 22).

I.

The Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis

Appended to this are printed the documents which were exchanged during the last days before the beginning of the German defensive action against Poland and the intervention of the western Powers, or which in any other respect refer to these events. These documents, when shortly recapitulated, give the following general survey:

1. At the beginning of August the Reich Government was informed of an exchange of notes between the representative of Poland in Danzig and the Senate of the Free City, according to which the Polish Government in the form of a short-term ultimatum and under threat of retaliatory measures had demanded the withdrawal of an alleged order of the Senate — an order which, in fact, had never been issued — concerning the activities of Polish customs inspectors (Documents 1 to 3). This caused the Reich Government to inform the Polish Government, on August 9th, that a repetition of such demands in the form of an ultimatum would lead to an aggravation of the relations between Germany and Poland, for the consequences of which the Polish Government would alone be responsible. At the same time, the attention of the Polish Government was drawn to the fact that the maintenance of the economic measures adopted by Poland against Danzig would force the Free City to seek other export and import possibilities (Document 4). The Polish Government answered this communication from the Reich Government with an Aide-Memoire of August 10th, handed to the German Embassy in Warsaw, which culminated in the statement that Poland would interpret every intervention of the Reich Government in Danzig matters, which might endanger Polish rights and interests there, as an aggressive action (Document 5).

2. On August 22nd, the British Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, acting under the impression of announcements of the impending conclusion of a Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the U.S.S.R., sent a personal letter to the Führer. Here he expressed on the one hand the firm determination of the British Government to fulfill its pledged obligations to Poland, on the other hand, the view that it was most advisable in the first instance to restore an atmosphere of confidence and then to solve the German-Polish problems through negotiations terminating in a settlement which should be internationally guaranteed (Document 6). The Führer, in his reply of August

23rd, set forth the real causes of the German-Polish crisis. He referred in particular to the generous proposal made by him in March of this year and stated that the false reports spread by England at that time regarding a German mobilization against Poland, the equally incorrect assertions about Germany's aggressive intentions towards Hungary and Roumania and, finally, the guarantee given by England and France to the Polish Government had encouraged the Polish Government not only to decline the German offer but to let loose a wave of terror against the Germans domiciled in Poland and to strangle Danzig economically. At the same time the Führer declared that Germany would not let herself be kept back from protecting her vital rights by any methods of intimidation whatsoever (Document 7).

3. Although the above-mentioned letter from the British Prime Minister of August 22nd, as well as speeches made on the subsequent day by British statesmen, showed a complete lack of understanding for the German standpoint, the Führer nevertheless resolved to make a fresh attempt to arrive at an understanding with England. On August 25th, he received the British Ambassador, once more with complete frankness explained to him his conception of the situation, and communicated to him the main principles of a comprehensive and far-sighted agreement between Germany and England which he would offer to the British Government once the problem of Danzig and the Polish Corridor was settled (Document 8).

4. While the British Government were discussing the preceding declaration from the Führer, an exchange of letters took place between the French President, M. Daladier, and the Führer. In his answer the Führer again submitted his reasons for Germany's standpoint in the German-Polish question and once more repeated his firm decision to regard the present Franco-German frontier as final (Documents 9 and 10).

5. In their answer to the step taken by the Führer on August 25th, which was handed over on the evening of August 28th, the British Government declared themselves prepared to consider the proposal for a revision of Anglo-German relationships. They further stated that they had received a definite assurance from the Polish Government that they were prepared to enter into direct discussions with the Reich Government on German-Polish questions. At the same time they repeated that in their opinion a German-Polish settlement must be safeguarded by international guarantees (Document 11). Despite grave misgivings arising from the whole of Poland's previous attitude and despite justifiable doubts in a sincere willingness on the part of the Polish Government for a direct settlement, the Führer, in his answer handed to the British Ambassador on the afternoon of August 29th, accepted the British proposal and declared that the Reich Government awaited the arrival of a Polish representative invested with plenipotentiary powers on August 30th. At the same time the Führer announced that the Reich Government would immediately draft proposals for a solution acceptable to them and would, if possible, have

these ready for the British Government before the Polish negotiator arrived (Document 12).

6. In the course of August 30th, neither a Polish negotiator with plenipotentiary powers nor any communication from the British Government about steps undertaken by them reached Berlin. On the contrary, it was on this day that the Reich Government were informed of the ordering of a general Polish mobilization (Document 13). Only at midnight did the British Ambassador hand over a new memorandum which, however, failed to disclose any practical progress in the treatment of Polish-German questions and confined itself to a statement that the Führer's answer of the preceding day was to be communicated to the Polish Government and that the British Government considered it impracticable to establish a German-Polish contact so early as on August 30th (Document 14).

7. Although the non-appearance of the Polish negotiator had done away with the conditions under which the British Government were to be informed of the Reich Government's conception of the basis on which negotiations might be possible, the proposals since formulated by the Reich were none the less communicated and explained in detail to the British Ambassador when he handed over the above-mentioned memorandum. The Reich Government expected that now at any rate, subsequently to this, a Polish plenipotentiary would be appointed. Instead, the Polish Ambassador in Berlin made a verbal declaration to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs on the afternoon of August 31st, to the effect that the Polish Government had been informed in the preceding night by the British Government that there was a possibility of direct negotiations between the Reich Government and the Polish Government, and that the Polish Government were favorably considering the British proposal. When expressly asked by the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs whether he had the authority to negotiate on the German proposals, the Ambassador stated that he was not entitled to do so, but had merely been instructed to make the foregoing verbal declaration. A further question from the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs whether he could enter into an objective discussion on the matter was expressly denied by the Ambassador.

8. The Reich Government thus were confronted with the fact that they had spent two days waiting in vain for a Polish plenipotentiary. On the evening of August 31st, they published the German proposals with a short account of the events leading up to them (Document 15). These proposals were described as unacceptable by Polish broadcast (Document 16).

9. Now that every possibility for a peaceful settlement of the Polish-German crisis was thus exhausted, the Führer saw himself compelled to resist by force the force which the Poles had long employed against Danzig, against the Germans in Poland, and, finally, by innumerable violations of the frontier, against Germany.

10. On the evening of September 1st, the Ambassadors of Great Britain and France handed to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs two notes couched in the same terms in which they demanded that Germany should withdraw her troops from Polish territory, and declared that if this demand were not conceded, their respective Governments would fulfill their obligations to Poland without further delay (Documents 18 and 19).

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs replied to both the Ambassadors that Germany could not accept the view expressed in the notes that she had attacked Poland.

11. In order to banish the menace of war, which had come dangerously close in consequence of these two notes, the Duce made a proposal for an armistice and a subsequent conference for the settlement of the German-Polish conflict (Document 20). The German and the French Government replied in the affirmative to this proposal, whilst the British Government refused to accept it (Documents 21 and 22). That this was so was already apparent in the speeches made by the British Prime Minister and the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the afternoon of September 2nd in the British Houses of Parliament, and a communication to that effect was made to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs by the Italian Ambassador on the evening of September 2nd. Thus also in the opinion of the Italian Government the initiative of the Duce had been wrecked by England.

12. On September 3rd, at 9 a. m., the British Ambassador arrived at the German Foreign Office and handed over a note in which the British Government, fixing a time limit of two hours, repeated their demand for a withdrawal of the German troops and, in the event of a refusal, declared themselves to be at war with Germany after this time limit had expired (Document 23). The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on September 3rd, 1939, at 11:15 a. m., delivered a note to the German Chargé d'Affaires in London in which he informed him that a state of war existed between the two countries as from 11 a. m. on September 3rd (Document 24).

On the same day, at 11:30 a. m., the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs handed to the British Ambassador in Berlin a memorandum from the Reich Government in which the Reich rejected the demands expressed by the British Government in the form of an ultimatum and in which it was proved that the responsibility for the outbreak of war rested solely with the British Government (Document 25).

On the afternoon of September 3rd, the French Ambassador in Berlin called on the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs and inquired whether the Reich Government were in a position to give a satisfactory answer to the question directed to them by the French Government in their note of September 1st. The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs told the Ambassador that after the English and French Notes of Sep-

tember 1st had been handed to him, the Head of the Italian Government had made a new intermediary proposal, to which, the Duce had added, the French Government had agreed. The Reich Government had informed the Duce on the preceding day that they were also prepared to accept the proposal. The Duce however had informed them later on in the day that his proposal had been wrecked by the intransigent attitude of the British Government. The British Government several hours previously had presented Germany with an ultimatum which had been rejected on the German side by a memorandum which he, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, would hand over to the French Ambassador for his information. Should the attitude of France towards Germany be determined by the same considerations as that of the British Government, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs could only regret this fact. Germany had always sought understanding with France. Should the French Government despite this fact adopt a hostile attitude towards Germany on account of their obligations towards Poland, the German people would regard this as a totally unjustifiable aggressive war on the part of France against the Reich. The French Ambassador replied that he understood from the remarks of the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Reich Government were not in a position to give a satisfactory answer to the French Note of September 1st. Under these circumstances he had the unpleasant task of informing the Reich Government that the French Government were forced to fulfill the obligations which they had entered into towards Poland, from September 3rd at 5 p. m. onwards. The French Ambassador at the same time handed over a corresponding written communication (CF. Document 26). The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs thereupon declared in conclusion that the French Government would bear the full responsibility for the suffering which the nations would have to bear if France attacked Germany.

II.

Documents

1. First Note from the Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Poland in the Free City of Danzig to the President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig, August 4, 1939.

(Translation)

Danzig, August 4, 1939.

I learn that the local Danzig customs officials posted on the frontier between the Free City of Danzig and East Prussia have declared in an unprecedented statement to the Polish customs officials, that the Danzig executives intend from 7 o'clock a. m. on August 6th onwards to oppose a certain number of Polish inspectors in the exercise of their normal duties, which functions are a part of the prerogatives of the Polish Government on the customs frontier. I am convinced that this act on the part of the local authorities depends either on a misunderstanding or on an erroneous interpretation of the instructions of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig.

I am fully convinced that you, Mr. President of the Senate, can have no doubt that this infringement of the fundamental rights of Poland will on no pretext whatever be tolerated by the Polish Government.

I await, by August 5th at 6 p. m. at the latest, your answer with the assurance that you have given instructions cancelling the action of your subordinates.

In view of the fact that the above-mentioned action is one of a series which have taken place on the frontier, I am forced to warn you, Mr. President of the Senate, that all Polish customs inspectors have received the order to appear for duty in uniform and bearing arms, on August 6th of the current year and on subsequent days, at every point on the frontier which they consider necessary for examination of the customs. Every attempt made to hinder them in the exercise of their duties, every attack or intervention on the part of the police will be regarded by the Polish Government as an act of violence against the officials of the Polish State in the pursuance of their duties.

If the above-mentioned illegal actions should take place, the Polish Government will take retaliatory measures (retorsions) without delay against the Free City, as the responsibility for them will rest entirely on the Senate of the Free City.

I hope to receive a satisfactory explanation before the above-mentioned date.

(*signed*): CHODACKI,
Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Poland.

2. Second Note from the Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Poland to the President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig, August 4, 1939.

(Translation)

Danzig, August 4, 1939.

Mr. President of the Senate:

The Polish Government beg to express its astonishment at the fact that the Senate should find technical difficulties in replying to so simple a matter. In the interest of avoiding threatening consequences, I note for the time being that no act of violence will be undertaken against our customs inspectors and that they will be able to proceed in a normal way with their duties. I must repeat nevertheless that the admonitions contained in my note of August 4th, 11:40 p. m. remain in force.

I beg to remain . . . .

(*Signed*): CHODACKI.

To
His Excellency, Herr Arthur Greiser,
President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig.

3. Reply of the President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig to the Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Poland, August 7, 1939.

(Translation)

Danzig, August 7, 1939.

His Excellency
The Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Poland,
M. Chodacki, Minister with plenipotentiary powers,
Danzig.

Sir:

In reply to your two notes dated the 4th of this month, the second of which I received on August 5th, I must express my astonishment to you that you should make a completely unverified rumor a pretext for sending the Danzig Government a short-term ultimatum from the Polish Government, and thus in this time of political unrest conjure up unfounded danger which may result in inconceivable disaster. The sudden decree of the Polish Government that *all* Polish customs officials on duty are to appear in uniform and bearing arms, is a breach of the arrangement agreed upon and can be understood only as an intentional provocation to bring about incidents and acts of violence of the most dangerous nature.

According to facts which I have since ascertained and concerning which I immediately telephoned to you on Saturday morning, the 5th inst., no order announcing that the Danzig executives from August 6th

at 7 a. m. onwards are to oppose a certain number of Polish inspectors in the exercise of their normal duties has been issued from an office, certainly not from any administrative quarter of the Customs Office of the Free City of Danzig.

I refer you further to my note of June 3rd of this year, in which I already carefully defined the relationship of the Danzig customs officials and the Polish customs inspectors on the frontier.

The Danzig Government protest with great energy against the threatened retorsions of the Polish Government which they regard as an absolutely inadmissible threat and the consequences of which will devolve on the Polish Government alone.

I beg to remain . . . .

(*Signed*): GREISER.

4. Communication from the Secretary of State in the German Foreign Office to the Polish Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, August 9, 1939.

(Translation)

Berlin, August 9, 1939.

The Reich Government have received with great astonishment information of the note of the Polish Government to the Senate of the Free City of Danzig, in which a demand was made in the form of an ultimatum to revoke an alleged decree intended to hinder the Polish customs inspectors in the exercise of their normal duties (which decree, however, was based on unfounded rumors, and in reality had never been issued by the Senate of the Free City of Danzig). In case of a refusal, the Free City of Danzig was threatened with retaliatory measures.

The Reich Government see themselves obliged to point out to the Polish Government that the repetition of such a demand, in the form of an ultimatum, to the Free City of Danzig and the threat of retaliatory measures would lead to greater tension in the relationship between Germany and Poland, and that the responsibility of such consequences would devolve exclusively on the Polish Government, the German Government already now declining all responsibility for them.

The German Government further draw the attention of the Polish Government to the fact that the measures taken by the Polish Government to prevent the import of certain goods from the Free City of Danzig to Poland are likely to bring about serious economic loss to the population of Danzig.

Should the Polish Government insist on further lending their support to such measures, there would, in the opinion of the Reich Government, be no choice left to the Free City of Danzig, as matters lie, but to seek other export and consequently import possibilities.

5. Communication from the Under-Secretary of State in the Polish Foreign Office to the German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw, August 10, 1939.

(Translation)

With the greatest surprise the Government of the Republic of Poland have taken note of the declaration given in Berlin on August 9, 1939, by the Secretary of State in the German Foreign Office to the Chargé d'Affaires a. i. of Poland on the relations existing between Poland and the Free City of Danzig. The Polish Government in fact cannot perceive any legal foundation justifying Germany to interfere in the above-mentioned relations.

Whatever discussions on the Danzig problem may have taken place between the Polish Government and the Government of the Reich, these had their foundation merely in the good will of the Government and did not arise out of any obligation whatsoever.

In reply to the aforesaid declaration of the Government of the Reich, the Polish Government are compelled to point out to the German Government that, as hitherto, they will in the future oppose by such means and measures as the Polish Government alone consider adequate, any attempt made by the authorities of the Free City of Danzig to jeopardize the rights and interests that Poland possesses in Danzig, on the basis of the agreement to which she is a part, and that the Polish Government will consider as an aggressive act any possible intervention of the Government of the Reich which may endanger these rights and interests.

6. Letter from the British Prime Minister to the Führer, August 22, 1939.

10, Downing Street, Whitehall. August 22, 1939.

Your Excellency:

Your Excellency will have already heard of certain measures taken by His Majesty's Government, and announced in the press and on the wireless this evening.

These steps have, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, been rendered necessary by the military movements which have been reported from Germany, and by the fact that apparently the announcement of a German-Soviet Agreement is taken in some quarters in Berlin to indicate that intervention by Great Britain on behalf of Poland is no longer a contingency that need be reckoned with. No greater mistake could be made. Whatever may prove to be the nature of the German-Soviet Agreement, it cannot alter Great Britain's obligation to Poland which His Majesty's Government have stated in public repeatedly and plainly, and which they are determined to fulfill.

It has been alleged that, if His Majesty's Government had made their position more clear in 1914, the great catastrophe would have been avoided. Whether or not there is any force in that allegation, His Majesty's Government are resolved that on this occasion there shall be no such tragic misunderstanding.

If the case should arise, they are resolved, and prepared, to employ without delay all the forces at their command, and it is impossible to foresee the end of hostilities once engaged. It would be a dangerous illusion to think that, if war once starts, it will come to an early end even if a success on any one of the several fronts on which it will be engaged should have been secured.

Having thus made our position perfectly clear, I wish to repeat to you my conviction that war between our two peoples would be the greatest calamity that could occur. I am certain that it is desired neither by our people, nor by yours, and I cannot see that there is anything in the questions arising between Germany and Poland which could not and should not be resolved without the use of force, if only a situation of confidence could be restored to enable discussions to be carried on in an atmosphere different from that which prevails today.

We have been, and at all times will be, ready to assist in creating conditions in which such negotiations could take place, and in which it might be possible concurrently to discuss the wider problems affecting the future of international relations, including matters of interest to us and to you.

The difficulties in the way of any peaceful discussion in the present state of tension are, however, obvious, and the longer that tension is maintained, the harder will it be for reason to prevail.

These difficulties, however, might be mitigated, if not removed, provided that there could for an initial period be a truce on both sides —and indeed on all sides—to press polemics and to all incitement.

If such a truce could be arranged, then, at the end of that period, during which steps could be taken to examine and deal with complaints made by either side as to the treatment of minorities, it is reasonable to hope that suitable conditions might have been established for direct negotiations between Germany and Poland upon the issues between them (with the aid of a neutral intermediary, if both sides should think that that would be helpful).

But I am bound to say that there would be slender hope of bringing such negotiations to successful issue unless it were understood beforehand that any settlement reached would, when concluded, be guaranteed by other Powers. His Majesty's Government would be ready, if desired, to make such contribution as they could to the effective operation of such guarantees.

At this moment I confess I can see no other way to avoid a catastrophe that will involve Europe in war.

In view of the grave consequences to humanity, which may follow from the action of their rulers, I trust that Your Excellency will weigh with the utmost deliberation the considerations which I have put before you.

(*Signed*): NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

7. The Führer's Letter in reply to the British Prime Minister, August 23, 1939.

(Translation)

August 23, 1939.

Your Excellency:

The Ambassador to His Britannic Majesty has just handed me a note in which Your Excellency, in the name of the British Government, has drawn attention to a number of points, which, in your opinion, are of extreme importance.

I beg to reply to your note as follows:

1. Germany has never sought to enter into conflict with Great Britain nor at any time interfered where British interests were concerned. On the contrary, Germany has for many years, although unfortunately without success, attempted to gain the friendship of Great Britain. For this reason, Germany voluntarily undertook a restriction of her own interests throughout a large area in Europe which would otherwise have been difficult to justify from a national political point of view.

2. The German Reich, however, has, like every other state, certain interests which it is impossible for it to renounce and which lie within the category which Germany's past history and her economic necessities have rendered of vital importance. Certain of these problems were, and are, of the utmost importance to any German Government both from a national political and from a psychological point of view.

One of these problems is that of the German City of Danzig and the problem of the Polish Corridor connected therewith. Only a few years ago this fact was recognized by numerous statesmen, by authorities in historical research and literary men, even in England. I should like to add that the civilization of all those areas which come within the sphere of German interests aforementioned, and especially those provinces which have returned to the Reich within the past eighteen months, was developed not by Englishmen but exclusively by Germans, and, in part, during a period of history which covers more than the last thousand years.

3. Germany was prepared to settle the problem of Danzig and of the Polish Corridor by a very generous proposal, made once for all, and by means of negotiations. The assertions disseminated by Great Britain with regard to the mobilization of German troops against Poland, the assertion concerning aggressive intentions with regard to Roumania, Hungary, etc., as also the more recent so-called guarantees given to Poland, effectually destroyed any inclinations on the part of Poland to negotiate on a basis which would at the same time be acceptable to Germany.

4. The general assurance given by Great Britain to Poland that Great Britain would support Poland in case of conflict in any circum-

stance, irrespective of the causes giving rise to such conflict, could only be regarded here as an incitement to let loose, under cover of what might be termed a blank cheque, a wave of unspeakable terror against the one and a half million Germans domiciled in Poland. The atrocities which have taken place there since that time were terrible indeed for those on whom they were inflicted, but intolerable for the German Reich, which, as one of the Great Powers, was expected to watch them idly. In regard to the Free City of Danzig, Poland has, on countless occasions, infringed its rights, sent demands which were in the nature of an ultimatum and begun a process of economic strangulation.

5. The Reich Government informed the Polish Government a short time ago that they were not inclined to accept these developments in silence, that they would not tolerate the despatch of further notes couched in the form of an ultimatum to Danzig, that they would not tolerate a continuance of acts of violence inflicted on the German section of the population, nor would they tolerate the ruin of the Free City of Danzig by means of economic pressure, that is to say, the destruction of the very existence of the population of Danzig by a form of customs blockade, nor would they tolerate the continuance of such acts of provocation against the Reich. Regardless of the above, a solution must and will be found for the problem of Danzig and of the Polish Corridor.

6. Your Excellency informs me in the name of the British Government that in the event of any act of interference on the part of Germany, you will be compelled to support Poland. I have taken due note of your statement and can assure you that it can in no way shake the determination of the Reich Government to protect the interests of the Reich as set forth in § 5. I likewise agree with your assurance that the ensuing war would, in this case, be a long one. If Germany is attacked by Britain, she is prepared and determined to fight. I have often declared to the German people and to the whole world that there can be no doubts as to the determination of the New German Reich to accept privation and misfortune in any form and at any time rather than sacrifice her national interests or even her honor.

7. The Reich Government have received information of the fact that the British Government intend to carry out mobilization measures, which in their nature are solely directed against Germany, as is stated in Your Excellency's note addressed to me. This is stated also to apply to France. As Germany never intended to adopt military measures other than those of a purely defensive nature against either Great Britain or France and, as has already been emphasized, never intended nor in the future intends to attack either Great Britain or France, the announcement which Your Excellency confirmed in your note can only constitute an intended threat against the Reich. I must, therefore, inform Your Excellency that in the event of such military measures being taken, I shall order the immediate mobilization of the German armed forces.

8. The question of a settlement of European problems in a peaceful spirit cannot be decided by Germany but chiefly by those who,

since the crime of the Treaty of Versailles was committed, have steadily and obstinately opposed any peaceful revision of its terms. Only a change of attitude on the part of the Powers responsible for the Treaty can bring about a change for the better in the existing relations between Britain and Germany. During my whole life-time I have struggled to achieve a friendship between Britain and Germany, but the attitude adopted by British diplomacy, up to the present at least, has served to convince me of the hopelessness of such an attempt. If the future were to bring a change in this respect, none would welcome it more than I.

8. Declaration made by the Führer to the British Ambassador on August 25, 1939, at 1:30 p. m.

(Translation)

The Führer declared at the outset that the British Ambassador at the close of their last conversation had expressed the hope that it would still prove possible to arrive at an understanding between Germany and England. He, the Führer, had thereupon considered the situation once more and intended today to take a step in regard to England which was to be as decisive as the step taken in regard to Russia, the result of which had been the recent pact.

Yesterday's meeting of the House of Commons and the speeches made by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax were further reasons why the Führer had again invited the British Ambassador to meet him.

The assertion that Germany wanted to conquer the world was ridiculous. The British Empire covered a territory of forty million square kilometers, Russia of nineteen million square kilometers, America of nine and a half million square kilometers and Germany of less than 600,000 square kilometers. It was thus quite clear who wanted to conquer the world.

The Führer informed the British Ambassador of the following:

1) The acts of provocation committed by Poland had become intolerable, irrespective of who might be responsible for them. If the Polish Government contested their responsibility, this merely proved that they themselves had no longer any influence on their military subordinates. In the preceding night twenty-one new frontier incidents had occurred. On the German side the utmost discipline had been displayed. All the incidents were due to Polish provocation. Besides this, civil aeroplanes had been fired on. If the Polish Government declared themselves not responsible, this merely proved that they were unable to keep control over their own people.

2) Germany was resolved under all circumstances to put an end to these Macedonian conditions on her eastern frontier, not

only in the interests of law and order but also for the sake of European peace.

3) The problem of Danzig and the Corridor would have to be solved. The British Prime Minister had made a speech which had done nothing towards bringing about a change in the German attitude. This speech might, if anything, give rise to a desperate and incalculable war between Germany and England, a war which would cause far greater bloodshed than that of 1914. In contrast to the last world war, Germany would not have to carry on a war on two fronts. The agreement concluded with Russia was unconditional and represented a turning point in the foreign policy of the Reich for the longest conceivable time. In no circumstance would Russia and Germany again take up arms against one another. Apart from this fact the agreements made with Russia would safeguard Germany, in economic respects also, for a war of the longest duration.

The Führer had always been strongly in favor of Anglo-German understanding. A war between England and Germany could in the most favorable circumstances bring Germany an advantage, but certainly not the slightest gain to England.

The Führer declared that the German-Polish problem had to and would be settled. He was, however, ready and resolved to approach England again, after this settlement, with a generous and comprehensive offer. He himself was a man of great decisions and he would in this case also be capable of a great action. He approved of the British Empire and was prepared to give a personal undertaking for its existence and to stake the might of the German Reich to that end, provided that

1) his colonial demands, which were limited and could be settled by peaceful negotiations, were fulfilled, for which he was prepared to concede a most protracted time-limit;

2) that his obligations to Italy remained untouched: in other words the Führer did not expect England to give up her French obligations and could for his part not abandon his Italian obligations;

3) he wished also to emphasize Germany's unalterable resolution never again to enter into a conflict with Russia.

The Führer would then be prepared to enter into agreements with Great Britain which, as he had already emphasized, would not only, on the German side, in any case safeguard the existence of the British Empire, but if necessary would guarantee German assistance for the British Empire, irrespective of where such assistance might be required. The Führer would then also be ready to accept a reasonable limitation of armaments, in accordance with the new political situation and economic requirements. Finally the Führer renewed his assurance that he was not interested in western problems and that

he did not for one moment consider any frontier correction in the west. The western line of fortifications, which had cost billions, was the final frontier of the Reich in the west.

If the British Government would consider these suggestions, they might end in a blessing not only for Germany but also for the British Empire. If the British Government rejected the suggestions, war would be inevitable. In no circumstances, however, would such a war add to the strength of Great Britain. That this was true, the last war had amply proved.

The Führer repeated that he was a man of great decisions to which he felt himself bound, and that this was his final proposal. Immediately after the settlement of the German-Polish question he would approach the British Government with an offer.

9. Letter of the French Premier to the Führer, August 26, 1939.
(Translation)

Paris, August 29, 1939.

Your Excellency:

The French Ambassador in Berlin has brought your personal message to my knowledge.

At an hour when you speak of the gravest responsibility which two Heads of Government can be asked to take, namely, that of shedding the blood of two great peoples desiring only peace and work, I owe it to you personally and to our respective nations to state that the fate of peace still rests in your hands.

You cannot doubt my feelings towards Germany, or the friendly feelings of France for your nation. No Frenchman has done more than I have to ensure not only peace between our two peoples, but also sincere cooperation in your own interests as well as in those of Europe and of the world.

Unless you are prepared to credit the French nation with a lower ideal of honor than the one with which I credit the German people, you cannot doubt that France will faithfully fulfill her obligations towards other powers which, like Poland, are, I am convinced, desirous of living at peace with Germany.

Both convictions are fully compatible with one another.

To this day there is nothing which might prevent a peaceful solution of the international crisis in a spirit of honor and dignity for all nations as long as the same will for peace prevails on all sides.

Together with the good will of France I proclaim that of all her allies. I personally guarantee the readiness always shown by Poland to have mutual recourse to methods of free conciliation such as can be envisaged between the Governments of two sovereign nations. With a perfectly clear conscience I can give you an assurance that among

the differences which have arisen between Germany and Poland with regard to the Danzig question, there is not a single one which could not be submitted to such a procedure with a view to finding a just and peaceful solution.

Upon my honor I can also state that in the clear and sincere solidarity of France with Poland and her allies there is nothing that might in any way impair the peaceful disposition of my country. This solidarity has never prevented us from supporting this peaceful disposition in Poland, and it does not do so today.

At so critical a moment I sincerely believe that no noble-minded person could understand how a war of destruction could be waged without a final attempt at a peaceful settlement between Germany and Poland having been undertaken. Your desire for peace could exercise its influence with full determination towards this end without detracting anything from Germany's honor. As Head of the French Government, desirous of attaining full harmony between the French and the German nation, yet bound on the other hand to Poland by ties of friendship and my pledged word, I am prepared to make every effort that an honorable man can make to bring this endeavor to a successful end.

Like myself you were a soldier in the last war. You know as well as I do the feelings of disgust and universal condemnation which the destruction caused by war left in the conscience of all nations, irrespective of its issue. The idea which I cherish of your great part as leader of the German nation on the road to peace towards the fulfillment of its tasks in the common effort towards civilization, prompts me to ask you for an answer to this my proposal.

Should French and German blood once more have to flow, just as it did twenty-five years ago, in an even longer and more murderous war, each nation will fight fully confident of its ultimate victory. Yet we can be sure that ruin and barbarity will be the most certain victors.

(*Signed*): DALADIER.

10. The Führer's Letter in reply to the French Premier, August 27, 1939.

Berlin, August 27, 1939.

Your Excellency:

I appreciate the concern you have expressed. I have always been equally conscious of the grave responsibility placed upon those who must decide the fate of nations. As an ex-soldier, I know as well as you do the horrors of war. This spirit and knowledge have guided me in a sincere endeavor to remove all causes of conflict between our two nations.

I once told the French people quite frankly that the return of the Saar territory would be the basis for the achievement of this aim. Once that territory was returned, I immediately solemnly renounced

any further claims which might affect France. The German people approved of my attitude. As you were able to see for yourself when you were in Germany last, the German people, conscious of the way they themselves behaved, did not and still do not entertain any animosity or still less hatred against their former brave opponents. On the contrary: once peace was definitely established along our western frontier, there came an increasing sympathy, at any rate on the part of the German nation,—a sympathy markedly demonstrated on many occasions.

The construction of the great western fortifications which have cost and will still cost many billion Marks, is documentary evidence that Germany has accepted and fixed the final frontier of the Reich. I doing so, the German people renounced two provinces which once belonged to the old German Reich, were later on regained at the price of many lives, and were finally defended at the price of still more lives.

Your Excellency will admit that this renunciation was not merely a gesture for tactical reasons but a decision confirmed by all our subsequent measures.

You cannot, Excellency, cite a single instance in which this final settlement of the German frontier in the West has ever been disputed by one line or word. I believed that by this renunciation and by this attitude every possible cause of conflict between our two nations, which might have led to a repetition of the tragic years of 1914 to 1918, had been eliminated.

This voluntary limitation of German claims in the West cannot however be regarded as an acceptance of the Dictate of Versailles in all other fields.

Year by year I have tried earnestly to achieve the revision of at least the most impossible and most unbearable of all the conditions of this Dictate through negotiation. This proved impossible. Many enlightened men of all nations believed and were convinced that revision was bound to come. Whatever objection may be raised against my methods, whatever fault may be found with them, it cannot be overlooked or denied that I succeeded without any more bloodshed in finding solutions which were in many cases satisfactory not only for Germany. By the manner in which these solutions were accomplished, statesmen of other nations were relieved of their obligation, which they often found impossible to fulfill, of having to accept responsibility for this revision before their own people. One thing I feel sure Your Excellency will admit, namely, that the revision was bound to come. The Dictate of Versailles was unbearable. No Frenchman with a sense of honor and certainly not you, M. Daladier, would have acted differently in a similar position than I did. I therefore tried to remove this most insane stipulation of the Dictate of Versailles. I made an offer to the Polish Government which actually shocked the German people.

No one but I could have dared to come forward with such a proposal. Therefore I could only make it once. I am firmly convinced that if Poland at that time had been advised to take a sensible course instead of being incited by a wild campaign of the British press against

Germany, accompanied by rumors of German mobilization, then Europe would today be able to enjoy a state of profound peace for the next twenty-five years. Actually, it was the lie about German aggression that excited public opinion in Poland; the Polish Government were handicapped in making necessary and clear decisions and, above all, their judgment on the extent of Poland's possibilities was clouded by the subsequent promise of a guarantee.

The Polish Government rejected the proposals.

Firmly convinced that Britain and France would now fight for Poland, Polish public opinion began to raise demands which might best be described as sheer lunacy were they not so extraordinarily dangerous. At that time unbearable terrorism set in; physical and economic oppression of the more than one and a half millions of Germans living in the territories severed from the Reich. I do not intend to speak of the atrocities which have occurred.

Even in Danzig, the outrages committed by the Polish authorities fully created the impression that the city was apparently hopelessly delivered up to the arbitrary action of a power that is foreign to the national character of the city and its population.

May I ask you, M. Daladier, how you as a Frenchman would act if, by the unfortunate ending of a bravely-fought war, one of your provinces were separated by a corridor in the possession of an alien power, and a large city—let us say Marseilles—were prevented from bearing allegiance to France, while Frenchmen in this territory were being persecuted, beaten, maltreated and even murdered in a bestial manner. You are a Frenchman, M. Daladier, and I therefore know how you would act. I am a German, M. Daladier, and you will not doubt my sense of honor and my sense of duty which make me act in exactly the same way. If you had to face a calamity such as confronts us, would you, M. Daladier, understand how Germany, for no reason at all, could use her influence to ensure that such a corridor through France should remain? That the stolen territories should not be returned, and that Marseilles should be forbidden to join France? I certainly cannot imagine Germany fighting you for such a cause. I, for Germany, renounced our claim to Alsace-Lorraine in order to avoid further bloodshed. Still less would we shed blood in order to maintain such an injustice as I have pictured, which would be as intolerable for you as it would be meaningless for us. My feelings on everything expressed in your letter, M. Daladier, are the same as yours. Perhaps we, as ex-soldiers, should readily understand each other on many points. Yet I would ask you to appreciate also this, namely, that no nation with a sense of honor can ever give up almost two million people and see them maltreated on its own frontiers.

I therefore formulated a clear demand: Danzig and the Corridor must return to Germany. The Macedonian conditions prevailing along our eastern frontier must cease. I see no possibility of persuading Poland, who deems herself safe from attack by virtue of the guarantees given to her, to agree to a peaceful solution. Unless we are determined

under the circumstances to solve the question one way or the other, I would despair of an honorable future for my country.

If fate decrees that our two peoples should fight one another once more over this question, it would be from different motives. I for my part, M. Daladier, would fight with my people for the reparation of an injustice, while the others would fight for its retention.

This is all the more tragic in view of the fact that many great men of your nation have long since recognized the folly of the solution found in 1919 and the impossibility of keeping it up for ever. I am fully conscious of the grave consequences which such a conflict would involve. But I think that Poland would suffer most, for whatever the issue of such a war, the Polish State of today would in any case be lost.

That our two peoples should now engage in another murderous war of destruction causes me as much pain as it does you, M. Daladier. Unfortunately, as stated earlier in my letter, I see no possibility open to us of influencing Poland to take a saner attitude and thus to remedy a situation which is unbearable for both the German people and the German Reich.

(*Signed*): ADOLF HITLER.

11. Memorandum from the British Government handed to the Führer by the British Ambassador on August 28, 1939, at 10:30 p. m.

1. His Majesty's Government have received the message conveyed to them from the German Chancellor by H. M. Ambassador in Berlin and have considered it with the care which it demands.

They note the Chancellor's expression of his desire to make friendship the basis of the relations between Germany and the British Empire and they fully share this desire. They believe with him that if a complete and lasting understanding between the two countries could be established it would bring untold blessings to both peoples.

2. The Chancellor's message deals with two groups of questions: —those which are the matters now in dispute between Germany and Poland, and those affecting the ultimate relations of Germany and Great Britain. In connection with these last, His Majesty's Government observe that the German Chancellor has indicated certain proposals which, subject to one condition, he would be prepared to make to the British Government for a general understanding. These proposals are of course stated in very general form and would require closer definition, but His Majesty's Government are fully prepared to take them, with some additions, as subjects for discussion and they would be ready, if the differences between Germany and Poland are peacefully composed, to proceed so soon as practicable to such discussion with a sincere desire to reach agreement.

3. The condition which the German Chancellor lays down is that there must first be a settlement of the differences between Germany

and Poland. As to that, His Majesty's Government entirely agree. Everything, however, turns upon the nature of the settlement and the method by which it is to be reached. On these points, the importance of which cannot be absent from the Chancellor's mind, his message is silent, and His Majesty's Government feel compelled to point out that an understanding upon both of these is essential to achieving further progress. The German Government will be aware that His Majesty's Government have obligations to Poland by which they are bound and which they intend to honor. They could not, for any advantage offered to Great Britain, acquiesce in a settlement which put in jeopardy the independence of a State to whom they have given their guarantee.

4. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government a reasonable solution of the differences between Germany and Poland could and should be effected by agreement between the two countries on lines which would include the safeguarding of Poland's essential interest, and they recall that in his speech of the 28th of April last the German Chancellor recognized the importance of these interests to Poland.

But as was stated by the Prime Minister in his letter to the German Chancellor of the 22nd of August, His Majesty's Government consider it essential for the success of the discussions which would precede the agreement that it should be understood beforehand that any settlement arrived at would be guaranteed by other Powers. His Majesty's Government would be ready if desired to make their contribution to the effective operation of such a guarantee.

In the view of His Majesty's Government it follows that the next step should be the initiation of direct discussions between the German and Polish Governments on a basis which would include the principles stated above, namely, the safeguarding of Poland's essential interests and the securing of the settlement by an international guarantee.

They have already received a definite assurance from the Polish Government that they are prepared to enter into discussions on this basis, and His Majesty's Government hope the German Government would for their part also be willing to agree to this course.

If, as His Majesty's Government hope, such discussion led to agreement the way would be open to the negotiation of that wider and more complete understanding between Great Britain and Germany which both countries desire.

5. His Majesty's Government agree with the German Chancellor that one of the principal dangers in the German-Polish situation arises from the report concerning the treatment of minorities. The present state of tension, with its concomitant frontier incidents, reports of maltreatment and inflammatory propaganda, is a constant danger to peace. It is manifestly a matter of the utmost urgency that all incidents of the kind should be promptly and rigidly suppressed and that unverified reports should not be allowed to circulate, in order that time may be afforded, without provocation on either side, for a full examination of the possibilities of settlement. His Majesty's Government

are confident that both Governments concerned are fully alive to these considerations.

6. His Majesty's Government have said enough to make their own attitude plain in the particular matters at issue between Germany and Poland. They trust that the German Chancellor will not think that, because His Majesty's Government are scrupulous concerning their obligations to Poland, they are not anxious to use all their influence to assist the achievement of a solution which may commend itself both to Germany and to Poland.

That such a settlement should be achieved seems to His Majesty's Government essential, not only for reasons directly arising in regard to the settlement itself, but also because of the wider considerations of which the German Chancellor has spoken with such conviction.

7. It is unnecessary in the present reply to stress the advantage of a peaceful settlement over a decision to settle the questions at issue by force of arms. The results of a decision to use force have been clearly set out in the Prime Minister's letter to the Chancellor of the 22nd of August, and His Majesty's Government do not doubt that they are as fully recognized by the Chancellor as by themselves.

On the other hand His Majesty's Government, noting with interest the German Chancellor's reference in the message now under consideration to a limitation of armaments, believe that, if a peaceful settlement can be obtained, the assistance of the world could confidently be anticipated for practical measures to enable the transition from preparation for war to the normal activities of peaceful trade to be safely and smoothly effected.

8. A just settlement of these questions between Germany and Poland may open the way to world peace. Failure to reach it would ruin the hopes of better understanding between Germany and Great Britain, would bring the two countries into conflict, and might well plunge the whole world into war. Such an outcome would be a calamity without parallel in history.

12. The Führer's Reply to the British Government handed to the British Ambassador on August 29, 1939, at 6:45 p. m.

(Translation)

August 29, 1939.

The British Ambassador in Berlin has informed the British Government of certain suggestions which I felt it incumbent upon me to put forward, in order:

1. to express once more the desire of the German Government for sincere Anglo-German understanding, cooperation and friendship;

2. to leave no room for doubt that such an understanding cannot be purchased at the expense of Germany's renunciation of her vital interests or even by the sacrifice of claims based just as much on general human rights as on the national dignity and honor of our nation.

It was with satisfaction that the German Government learned from the written reply of the British Government and the verbal declarations of the British Ambassador, that the British Government for their part also prepared to improve Anglo-German relations and to develop and to foster these in the spirit of the German suggestions.

The British Government are likewise convinced that the removal of the tension between Germany and Poland, which has become intolerable, is indispensable if this hope is to be realized.

Since the autumn of 1938 and for the last time in March 1939, verbal and written proposals have been submitted to the Polish Government, which, in consideration of the friendship then existing between Germany and Poland, might have led to a settlement of the questions under dispute which would have been acceptable to both parties. The British Government are aware that the Polish Government saw fit to reject these proposals finally in March of this year. At the same time the Polish Government made their rejection a pretext or an occasion for the adoption of military measures which have since then been continued on an ever-increasing scale. Poland had, in fact, mobilized as early as the middle of last month. In connection with the mobilization, numerous incidents took place in the Free City of Danzig at the instigation of the Polish authorities, and demands of a more or less threatening character amounting to an ultimatum were addressed to the Free City of Danzig. The closing of the frontier, which was at first in the nature of a customs measure, was afterwards carried out on military lines and was extended to affect traffic with the object of bringing about the political disintegration and the economic ruin of this German community.

Furthermore, the large group of Germans living in Poland was subjected to atrocious and barbarous illtreatment and to other forms of persecution which resulted in some cases in the death by violence of many Germans domiciled there or in their deportation under the most cruel circumstances. Such a situation is intolerable for a Great Power and has now forced Germany after months of inactive observation to undertake the necessary steps for the protection of her rightful interests. The German Government can only most seriously assure the British Government that that state of affairs has now been reached for which continued acquiescence or even inactive observation is no longer possible.

The demands of the German Government imply a revision of the Treaty of Versailles in this area, a fact which was recognized as necessary from the very outset; they constitute the return of Danzig and the Polish Corridor to Germany and the safeguarding of the German minorities domiciled in those territories remaining in Polish possession.

The Reich Government note with satisfaction that the British Government are also convinced on principle that some solution must be found for the state of affairs which has now developed. They further consider they may assume that the British Government entertain no doubt on the fact that this is a state of affairs which can no longer be remedied in a matter of days or even weeks but for which perhaps only a few hours yet remain. For in view of the disorganized state of Poland we must at any moment be prepared for the possibility of events occurring which Germany could not possibly tolerate.

If the British Government still believe that these grave differences can be solved by direct negotiations, the Reich Government on their part regret at the outset that they are unable to share such an opinion. They have already tried to open up a way for peaceful negotiations of this nature, without meeting with the support of the Polish Government, and only seeing their efforts rejected by the abrupt initiation of measures of a military character in accordance with the general development indicated above.

There are two factors which the British Government consider important:

1. to remove most speedily the imminent danger of a conflagration by means of direct negotiations, and
2. to give the necessary economic and political safeguards by means of international guarantees for the future existence of the remaining Polish State.

To that, the Reich Government desire to make the following statement:

Despite their sceptical judgment of the prospects of such direct negotiations, the Reich Government are nevertheless prepared to accept the English proposal, and to enter into direct discussions. They do so solely because—as already emphasized—the written communication from the British Government, which they have received, gives them the impression that the latter also desire a friendly agreement along the lines indicated to their Ambassador, Sir Nevile Henderson. The German Government desire in this way to give to the British Government and to the British people a proof of the sincerity of the German intention of arriving at a state of permanent friendship with Great Britain.

The Reich Government nevertheless feel bound to point out to the British Government that in the case of a reorganization of the territorial condition in Poland, the Reich Government are no longer in a position to take upon themselves any guarantees, or to participate in any guarantees, without the cooperation of the U. S. S. R.

The Reich Government in their proposals moreover never had the intentions of attacking vital Polish interests or of questioning the existence of an independent Polish state. Under these conditions, the Reich Government therefore agree to accept the proposed intermediation of the British Government to send to Berlin a Polish representative

invested with plenipotentiary powers. They expect his arrival on Wednesday, August 30, 1939.

The Reich Government will immediately draft the proposals for a solution acceptable to them, and, if possible, will make such proposals also available for the British Government before the Polish negotiator arrives.

13. Telephone Message from the German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the German Foreign Office on August 30, 1939, at 5:30 p. m.

(Translation)

Notices ordering a general mobilization have been posted in Poland for one hour. The first day of mobilization is August 31st: everybody in possession of a white mobilization card must report at once.

14. Memorandum from the British Government handed to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs by the British Ambassador on August 30, 1939, at midnight.

1. His Majesty's Government appreciate the friendly reference in the declaration contained in the reply of the German Government to the latter's desire for an Anglo-German understanding and to their statement of the influence which this consideration has exercised upon their policy.

2. His Majesty's Government repeat that they reciprocate the German Government's desire for an improvement in relations, but it will be recognized that they could not sacrifice the interests of friends in order to obtain that improvement. They fully understand that the German Government cannot sacrifice Germany's vital interests, but the Polish Government are in the same position, and His Majesty's Government believe that the vital interests of the two countries are not incompatible.

3. His Majesty's Government note that the German Government accept the British proposal and are prepared to enter into direct discussions with the Polish Government.

4. His Majesty's Government understand that the German Government accept in principle the condition that any settlement should be made subject to an international guarantee. The question of who shall participate in this guarantee will have to be discussed further, and His Majesty's Government hope that to avoid loss of time the German Government will take immediate steps to obtain the assent of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics whose participation in the guarantee His Majesty's Government have always assumed.

5. His Majesty's Government also note that the German Government accept the position of the British Government as to Poland's vital interests and independence.

6. His Majesty's Government must make an express reservation in regard to the statement of particular demands put forward by the German Government in an earlier passage in their reply. They understand that the German Government are drawing up proposals for a solution. No doubt these proposals will be fully examined during the discussions. It can then be determined how far they are compatible with the essential conditions which His Majesty's Government have stated and which the German Government have expressed their willingness to accept.

7. His Majesty's Government are at once informing the Polish Government of the German Government's reply. The method of contact and the arrangements for discussions must obviously be agreed with all urgency between the German Government and the Polish Government, but in His Majesty's Government's view it would be impracticable to *establish* contact so early as today.

8. His Majesty's Government *fully* recognize the need for speed in the initiation of discussions and they share the apprehensions of the Chancellor arising from the proximity of two mobilized armies standing face to face. They would accordingly most strongly urge that both parties should undertake that during negotiations no aggressive military movements will take place. His Majesty's Government feel confident that they could obtain such an undertaking from the Polish Government, if the German Government would give similar assurances.

9. Further His Majesty's Government would suggest that a temporary *modus vivendi* might be arranged for Danzig, which might prevent the occurrence of incidents tending to render German-Polish relations more difficult.

Berlin, August 30, 1939.

15. Official German Statement published on August 31, 1939, at 9 p. m., containing the Proposal for a settlement of the Danzig and the Polish Corridor Problem, as well as of the question concerning the German and Polish Minorities.

(Translation)

In a note dated August 28, 1939, addressed to the German Government, the British Government declared themselves prepared to offer their services as intermediaries in arranging direct negotiations between Germany and Poland for the settlement of the problems under dispute. In this note they left no room for doubt that in view of the continued incidents and the general state of tension throughout Europe they also were aware of the urgency of such action.

In spite of their scepticism regarding the willingness of the Polish Government to reach any agreement, the German Government, in a

reply dated August 29, 1939, declared themselves prepared in the interests of peace to accept British intermediation or suggestions. Taking into account all the circumstances prevailing at the moment they considered it necessary to point out in their reply that, if the danger of catastrophe is to be avoided at all, quick and immediate action is indispensable. The German Government have therefore declared themselves willing to receive a delegate appointed by the Polish Government by the evening of August 30, 1939, provided that this delegate should be invested with full power not only to take part in discussions but to negotiate and to take a final decision.

The German Government have further expressed the hope that they would be able to submit to the British Government the gist of the proposed agreement before the arrival of the Polish delegate in Berlin.

Instead of a declaration regarding the arrival of an authorized Polish representative the German Government, in reply to their readiness to negotiate, received firstly the news of the Polish mobilization, and it was only towards midnight on August 30, 1939, that they received the assurance by Britain, couched in more general terms, that she would use her influence to arrange for the opening of negotiations.

Owing to the non-arrival of the Polish delegate who was expected by the Reich Government, the primary condition for informing the British Government, who had themselves recommended direct negotiations between Germany and Poland, of the standpoint taken by the Reich as to the basis for such negotiations, no longer existed. Nevertheless, Herr von Ribbentrop, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, acquainted the British Ambassador, when the latter handed over the last British note, with the exact wording of the German proposals as prepared for the expected arrival of the Polish plenipotentiary.

Under these circumstances the German Government considered that they had every right to expect that, at least subsequently to this, the nomination of a Polish delegate would immediately take place. It was clearly too much to expect of the German Government that they should continue not only to reiterate their willingness to enter upon such negotiations, but even to sit and wait and allow themselves to be put off by the Polish side with feeble subterfuges and empty declarations.

In the meantime a démarche by the Polish Ambassador has again shown that not even he is authorized to enter upon any discussion whatsoever, much less to negotiate.

Thus the Führer and the German Government have now waited for two days in vain for the arrival of an authorized Polish delegate.

Under these circumstances the German Government cannot but regard their proposals as having been once more virtually rejected, although they are of the opinion that in the form in which they were also communicated to the British Government, they were formulated in a spirit of more than goodwill and fairness and could have been accepted.

The Government of the Reich consider it appropriate to inform the public of the proposed basis for negotiation as communicated to the British Ambassador by Herr von Ribbentrop, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Proposal for a settlement of the Danzig and the Polish Corridor Problem as well as of the question concerning the German and Polish Minorities.

The situation between the German Reich and Poland is at the present time such that any further incident may lead to an outbreak of hostilities between the military forces of the two countries, which have already taken up their position on the respective side of the frontier. Any peaceful solution of the problem must be of such a nature that the events which originally brought about this state of affairs cannot be repeated on the next occasion thus causing a state of tension not only in Eastern Europe but also elsewhere.

The causes of this development are to be found in

(1) the intolerable demarcation of the frontiers as dictated in the Treaty of Versailles,

(2) the intolerable treatment of the minority in the territories cut off from the Reich.

In putting forward these proposals, the Reich Government are attempting to find a final solution putting an end to the intolerable situation arising from the present demarcation of frontiers, securing to both parties their vital lines of communication, eliminating as far as possible the problem of the minorities and, in so far as this should prove impossible, rendering the fate of the minorities bearable by effectively guaranteeing their rights.

The Reich Government feel convinced that it is indispensable that economic and personal damage inflicted since 1918 should be investigated, and full compensation made therefore. Of course, the Reich Government regard this obligation as binding upon both parties.

The above considerations give rise to the following concrete proposals:

(1) By reason of its purely German character and the unanimous will of its population, the Free City of Danzig shall be returned forthwith to the German Reich.

(2) The territory known as the Polish Corridor, that is to say, the territory bounded by the Baltic Sea and a line running from Marienwerder to Graudenz, Kulm, Bromberg, (including these towns), and then in a westerly direction towards Schönlanke, shall itself decide whether it shall become part of the German Reich or remain with Poland.

(3) For that purpose, a plebiscite shall be held in this territory. All Germans who were domiciled in this area on the first of January 1918 or who were born there on or before that day, also all Poles, Cassubians, etc., who were domiciled in this area on that day or who were born there on or before the above-mentioned date, shall be entitled to vote. Germans who have been expelled from this territory shall return for the purpose of registering their votes.

In order to ensure an impartial plebiscite and to guarantee that the necessary and extensive preparations for the plebiscite shall be

carried out correctly, an International Commission like the one formed in connection with the Saar plebiscite, and consisting of members appointed by the four Great Powers, Italy, the U.S.S.R., France and Great Britain, shall be formed immediately, and placed in charge of this territory. This commission shall exercise sovereign rights throughout the territory. To that end, the territory shall be evacuated by the Polish military forces, by the Polish police and by the Polish authorities within the shortest possible time to be agreed upon.

(4) The Polish port of Gdynia to the extent of the Polish settlement is not included in this area but, as a matter of principle, is recognized as Polish territory.

The details of the boundaries of this Polish port shall be decided on by Germany and Poland, and if necessary established by an International Court of Arbitration.

(5) In order to allow for ample time for the necessary and extensive preparations for the carrying out of an impartial plebiscite, this plebiscite shall not take place before a period of twelve months has elapsed.

(6) In order that during that period, Germany's lines of communication with East Prussia and Poland's access to the sea may be unrestrictedly ensured, certain roads and railway lines shall be determined, in order to facilitate unobstructed transit. In this connection only such taxes may be levied as are necessary for the upkeep of the lines of communication and for the carrying out of transport.

(7) The allocation of this territory shall be decided on by the absolute majority of the votes cast.

(8) In order to secure, after the plebiscite (irrespective of the result thereof), Germany's unrestricted communication with the province of Danzig—East Prussia, and Poland's access to the sea, Germany shall, should the territory be returned to Poland as a result of the plebiscite, be given an exterritorial traffic zone running, from say, Bütow to Danzig or Dirschau, for the purpose of building a Reich Motor Road (Reichsautobahn) and also a four-track railway line. The construction of the motor road and of the railway shall be carried out in such a manner that Polish lines of communication are not affected thereby, i. e. they are to be overbridged or underbridged. This zone shall be one kilometer in width and shall be German territory.

Should the result of the plebiscite be in favor of Germany, Poland shall have the same rights as Germany would have had, to build an exterritorial road and railway connection in order to secure her free and unrestricted access to her port of Gdynia.

(9) In the event of the Polish Corridor being returned to the Reich, the latter declares herself prepared to arrange with Poland for an exchange of population to the extent to which this could be carried out according to the conditions in the Corridor.

(10) Any special rights claimed by Poland within the port of Danzig shall, on the basis of parity, be negotiated in exchange of equal rights for Germany at the Port of Gdynia.

(11) In order to avoid any sense of menace or danger on either side, Danzig and Gdynia henceforth shall have a purely commercial character, i. e. neither of these places shall be provided with means of military defence or fortifications.

(12) The Peninsula of Hela, which according to the result of the plebiscite would be allocated either to Poland or to Germany, shall also be demilitarized in any case.

(13) The Reich Government having most serious complaints to make about the treatment of the minority by the Poles, the Polish Government on the other hand considering themselves entitled to raise complaints against Germany, both parties agree to submit these complaints to an International Commission of Investigation charged to investigate into all complaints about economic and personal damage, as well as other acts of terrorism.

Germany and Poland bind themselves to indemnify the minorities on either side for any economic damages and other wrongs inflicted upon them since 1918; and or to revoke all expropriations or otherwise to completely indemnify the respective person or persons for these and other encroachments upon economic life.

(14) In order to free the Germans remaining in Poland, as well as the Poles remaining in Germany, from the feeling of being deprived of the benefits of International Law, and above all to afford them the certainty of their not being made to take part in actions and in furnishing services of a kind not compatible with their national convictions, Germany and Poland mutually agree to safeguard the rights of their respective minorities by most comprehensive and binding agreements for the purpose of warranting these minorities the preservation, free development and cultivation of their national customs, habits and traditions, to grant them in particular and for that purpose the form of organization considered necessary by them. Both parties undertake not to draft the members of the minority into military service.

(15) In case of an agreement on the basis of these proposals being reached, Germany and Poland declare themselves prepared immediately to order and carry through the demobilization of their respective armed forces.

(16) Any additional measures required to hasten the carrying through of the above agreement shall be mutually agreed upon between Germany and Poland.

16. Announcement made by the Polish Broadcasting Station at Warsaw on August 31, 1939, at 11 p. m.

(Translation)

The publication today of the official German communiqué has clearly revealed the aims and intentions of German policy. It proves the undisguised aggressive intentions of Germany towards Poland. The conditions under which the Third Empire is prepared to negotiate with

Poland are: Danzig must immediately return to the Reich. Pomorze together with the cities of Bromberg and Graudenz are to be subjected to a plebiscite, for which all Germans who left that territory for any reason whatsoever since the year 1918 may return. The Polish military forces and the police force shall be evacuated from Pomorze. The police force of England, France, Italy and the U.S.S.R. will be placed in charge of the territory. The plebiscite is to take place after twelve months have elapsed. The territory of the Hela Peninsula will also be included in the plebiscite, Gdynia as a Polish town is excluded. Irrespective of the result of the plebiscite an exterritorial road one kilometer wide is to be constructed.

The German News Agency announces that the time allowed for the acceptance of these conditions expired yesterday. Germany has waited in vain for a Polish delegate. The answer given was the military orders issued by the Polish Government.

Words can now no longer veil the aggressive plans of the new Huns. Germany is aiming at the domination of Europe and is cancelling the rights of nations with as yet unprecedented cynicism. This impudent proposal shows clearly how necessary were the military orders given by the Polish Government.

17. Speech delivered by the Führer before the Reichstag on September 1, 1939.

(Translation)

Members of the German Reichstag:

For months we have been tormented by a problem once set us by the dictated Treaty of Versailles and which has now assumed such a character as to become utterly intolerable.

Danzig was and is a German city!
The Corridor was and is German!

All these districts owe their cultural development exclusively to the German people, without whom absolute barbarism would prevail in these eastern tracts of country.

Danzig was separated from us! The Corridor was annexed by Poland! The German minorities living there were illtreated in the most appalling manner! More than a million persons with German blood in their veins were compelled to leave their homes as early as 1919-1920.

Here, as always, I have attempted to change this intolerable condition of things by means of peaceful proposals for a revision. It is a lie when the world alleges that we always used pressure in attempting to carry out any revision. There was ample opportunity for fifteen years before National Socialism assumed power to carry through revisions by means of a peaceful understanding. This was not done! I myself then took the initiative in every single case, not only once, but many times, to bring forward proposals for the revision of absolutely intolerable conditions. As you know, all these proposals have been rejected. I need not enumerate them in detail: those proposals

for a limitation of armaments, if necessary even for the abolition of armaments, those for restrictions on methods of warfare, those for eliminating methods of modern warfare, which, in my opinion, are scarcely compatible with International Law. You know the proposals which I made as to the necessity of restoring German sovereign rights in certain territories of the Reich, those countless attempts I made to bring about a peaceful solution of the Austrian problem, and later on that of the Sudetenland, Bohemia and Moravia. It was all in vain!

One thing, however, is impossible: to demand that a peaceful revision should be made of an intolerable state of affairs—and then obstinately refuse such a peaceful revision.

And it is just as impossible to assert that in such a situation to act on one's own initiative in making a revision is to violate a law. For us Germans the dictated Treaty of Versailles is not a law! It won't do to blackmail a person at the point of a pistol with the threat of starvation for millions of people into signing a document and afterwards proclaim that this document with its forced signature was a solemn law!

In the case of Danzig and the Corridor I have again tried to solve the problems by means of peaceful proposals suggesting a discussion. One thing was obvious: they had to be solved!

That the date of this solution may perhaps be of little interest to the Western Powers is conceivable. But this date is not a matter of indifference to us. First and foremost, however, it was not and could not be a matter of indifference to the suffering victims.

In conversation with Polish statesmen, I have discussed the ideas which you have heard me express here in my last speech to the Reichstag. No one can maintain that this was an unjust procedure or even unreasonable pressure. I then had the German proposals clearly formulated and I feel bound to repeat once more that nothing could be fairer or more modest than those proposals submitted by me. And I now wish to declare to the whole world that I, and I alone, was in a position to make such proposals. For I know quite definitely that I was thereby acting contrary to the opinion of millions of Germans. Those proposals were rejected! But more than that! They were replied to by mobilization, increased terrorism, intensified pressure on the German minorities in those areas and by a gradual economic and political strangulation of the Free City of Danzig which, during the past few weeks, found its expression in military measures and traffic restrictions. Poland virtually began a war against the Free City of Danzig. Furthermore, she was not prepared to settle the problem of the Corridor in a fair manner satisfying the interests of both parties. And lastly, Poland has never thought of fulfilling her obligations with regard to the minorities.

In this connection I feel it necessary to state that Germany has fulfilled her obligations in this respect! Minorities domiciled in Germany are not subject to persecution. Let any Frenchman get up and declare that French citizens living in the Saar territory are oppressed, ill-treated or deprived of their rights! No one can make such an assertion!

For four months I have watched these developments without taking action but not without issuing repeated warnings. Recently I have made these warnings more and more emphatic. Over three weeks ago the Polish Ambassador was, at my request, informed that: If Poland persisted in sending further notes in the nature of an ultimatum to Danzig and in further oppressing the German minorities, or if attempts were made to bring about the economic ruin of Danzig by means of customs restrictions, Germany would no longer stand aside and remain inactive.

I have left no room for doubt that in this respect the Germany of today is not to be confused with post-war Germany.

Attempts have been made to justify the action against the German minorities by declaring that they had given provocation. I am at a loss to know what "provocation" those women and children are supposed to have given who have been ill-treated and deported or what was the nature of the provocation given by all those who were tortured in the most inhuman and sadistic way before they were finally put to death.

One thing I know however: there is not one single Great Power possessed of a feeling of honor, which would countenance such conditions for any length of time! In spite of all I have made one last attempt. Although possessed of the innermost conviction that the Polish Government—perhaps also owing to their dependence on a now unchained wild soldiery—are not in earnest as regards a real understanding. I have nevertheless accepted a proposal of mediation submitted by the British Government. The latter proposed not to carry on any negotiations themselves, they assured me however of their establishing a direct connection between Poland and Germany for the purpose of thus facilitating once more direct discussions.

I must here state the following: I have accepted that proposal. For these discussions I had drawn up the fundamentals which are known to you. And then I and my Government have sat expectantly for two whole days in order to find out whether the Polish Government saw fit finally to dispatch an authorized representative or not!

Up to last night the Polish Government did not dispatch an authorized representative, but informed us by their ambassador that at present they were considering the question whether and to what extent they might be able to accept the English proposals; of the result they would inform England.

Gentlemen, if such an impertinence could be offered to the German Reich and its ruler, and if the German Reich and its ruler were to tolerate such treatment, the German Nation would not deserve a better fate than to vanish from the political arena.

My love of peace and my endless patience should not be confounded with weakness or even cowardice! Last night I informed the British Government that under these conditions I found it impossible to detect any inclination on the part of the Polish Government to enter into a really earnest discussion with us.

Thus these proposals of mediation were frustrated, because in the meantime the answer to these offers of mediation had been, first, the

order for Polish general mobilization, and, second, additional serious outrages. Repetitions of the latter incidents occurred last night. While only recently during one single night twenty-one frontier incidents occurred, last night there were fourteen, three of them of a most serious character.

For that reason, I now have decided to address Poland in exactly the same language applied by Poland to us in recent months.

Now if there are statesmen in the West who declare that their interests are involved, I can only regret such a statement, their opinion, however, cannot for one single minute persuade me to deviate from the execution of my duties. I have solemnly declared and repeat once more that we have no claims at all on these Western States, and shall never demand anything from them. I have declared that the frontier between Germany and France is final. I have repeatedly offered England our friendship, and if necessary closest cooperation. Love, however, is not a one-sided affair, but must be responded to by the other side. Germany has no interests in the West, our fortifications in the West (*Westwall*) are for all times to come the frontier of the Reich. We have no other aims in the future, and this attitude of the Reich will remain unchanged.

Some of the other European States understand our attitude. First of all I would thank Italy for having supported us all this time. You will also understand that in connection with this struggle we do not want to make an appeal for any foreign help. This task of ours we shall solve ourselves.

The neutral states have assured us of their neutrality exactly as we previously have guaranteed their neutrality. This assurance we consider a sacred obligation, and as long as nobody infringes upon their neutrality, we too shall painstakingly abide by it. Because, what could we expect or desire from them?

I feel very much gratified at being able to hereby inform you of an event of special importance. You are aware that Russia and Germany are governed by two different doctrines. There was only one single question to be cleared: Germany has no intention of exporting her doctrine, and as long as Soviet Russia does not intend exporting her own doctrine to Germany, I do not see any longer any reason for our being opponents again. Both of us are agreed on that point. Any struggle between us would only result in the benefit of others. We have therefore resolved to enter into an agreement which will exclude any application of force between us in the future, which obligates us to consult with each other in certain European questions and facilitates economic collaboration, and above all warrants that the energies of these two great states are not mutually consumed. Any attempt on the part of the Western States, aiming at a change of the existing facts will prove futile, and in that connection I would like to state one thing: this political decision signifies an enormous change regarding the future, and is absolutely final!

I believe that the whole German people will approve of this political attitude! In the World War, Russia and Germany fought against each other and were the ultimate sufferers. That shall and will never

happen again! Yesterday, the Non-Aggression and Consultation Pact, which came into force the day it was signed, was ratified in Moscow and in Berlin. In Moscow the Pact was acclaimed with the same satisfaction as in Berlin.

I approve of every word in the speech made by M. Molotov, the Russian Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

Our aims: I am determined to solve: firstly, the Danzig question, secondly, the Corridor question, thirdly, to see to it that a change takes place in Germany's relations to Poland, which will ensure a peaceful co-existence of the two States.

I am determined to fight until either the present Polish Government is disposed to effect this change or until another Polish Government is prepared to do so.

I will eliminate from the German frontiers that element of insecurity, that atmosphere which permanently resembles that of civil war.

I will see to it that on the eastern frontier the same peaceful conditions prevail as on the other frontiers. I will at the same time act in such a way as not to contradict what I announced to you, Gentlemen, in the Reichstag as my proposals to the world. That is, I will not wage war against women and children! I have instructed my air force to limit their attacks to military objects. But should the enemy think this leaves him free to fight in the opposite way, then he will get an answer which will drive him out of his senses!

In the night Polish soldiers of the regular Army fired the first shots in our own territory. Since 5:45 a. m. we have been returning their fire. And from now onwards a bomb will be answered by a bomb!

Who fights with poison will be fought with poison. Who disregards the rules of human warfare can only expect us to take the same steps.

I will carry on this fight, no matter against whom, until the safety of the Reich and its rights are secured!

For more than six years now I have been at work in building up the German armed forces. During this period more than ninety billions have been expended in creating our armed forces. Today, they are the best equipped in the world and are far superior to those of 1914!

My confidence in them can never be shaken!

When I called up these forces, and when I now expect the German people to make sacrifices, if necessary every sacrifice, I have the right to do so; for I myself am just as ready today as I was in the past to make every personal sacrifice.

There is nothing I demand of any German which I myself was not prepared to do at any moment for four long years.

There shall not be any deprivations for Germans in which I myself shall not immediately share!

From this moment my whole life shall belong more than ever to my people. I now want to be nothing but the first soldier of the German Reich.

Therefore, I have once again put on that uniform which was always so sacred and dear to me. I shall not take it off until after the victory—or I shall not live to see the end.

Should anything happen to me in this fight, my first successor shall be Party Member Goering. Should anything happen to Party Member Goering, his successor shall be Party Member Hess. To these men as your leaders you would then owe the same absolute loyalty and obedience as you owe me!

In the event that something fatal should happen to Party Member Hess, I now have made legal provisions for the convocation of the Senate, which shall then elect the worthiest, that is to say the most valiant among them.

As a National Socialist and a German soldier I enter into this fight with a strong heart! My whole life was but one continued struggle for my people, for its rebirth, and for Germany, and above all that struggle there stood one single conviction: The Faith in that People!

One word I have never known: Capitulation.

If, however, there should be anyone thinking that we are at the brink of hard times, I urge him to consider the fact that at one time a Prussian King ruling over a ridiculously small state confronted one of the greatest coalitions, yet ultimately defeated it in three campaigns, simply because he was possessed of that certain undaunted spirit and believing heart also required of us in these times.

The contemporaneous world I would assure however that in the future course of German history a November 1918 will never occur again.

In the same measure in which I myself am prepared to sacrifice my life for my people and for Germany, I demand the same of every other person.

But whosoever believes that he can resist this national decree, be it directly or indirectly, will find himself vastly mistaken.

We will not tolerate traitors.

We thus act in accordance with our old principle, namely, that it is of no importance whether we go on living, but it is vital that our nation and that Germany should live.

I expect of you, as the emissaries of the Reich, that you will do your duty in whatever position you are called upon to fill.

You must be the standard-bearers of resistance, cost it what it may. Let no one report to me that in his province, his district, his group or his unit the morale is bad. It is you who are responsible for the morale. I am responsible for public feeling throughout Germany and you are responsible for public feeling in your provinces and districts. No one has the right to refuse this responsibility. The sacrifice that is demanded of us is not greater than the sacrifice which has been demanded of many past generations. All those men who have, before us, trod the path of bitter and difficult duty for Germany's sake did nothing more than we are called upon to do, the sacrifice they made was neither lighter, less painful nor easier than the sacrifice that is demanded of us.

I expect every German woman to join up in strict discipline and do her duty in this great community of Combatants.

German youth, needless to say, will fulfill heart and soul what is expected and demanded of them by the nation and by the National-Socialist State.

If we form this community, fused together, ready for everything, determined never to capitulate, our firm resolve will master every need.

I conclude with the words with which I once started my fight for power in the Reich. At that time I said:

"If our will is so strong that no emergency can break it, then our will and our good German sword will master and overthrow need and distress."

Germany — Sieg Heil!

18. Note handed to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs by the British Ambassador on September 1, 1939, at 9:30 p. m.

Berlin, September 1, 1939.

Your Excellency:

On the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs I have the honor to make the following communication.

Early this morning the German Chancellor issued a proclamation to the German Army which indicated clearly that he was about to attack Poland.

Information which has reached His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government indicates that German troops have crossed the Polish frontier and that attacks on Polish towns are proceeding.

In these circumstances it appears to the Governments of the United Kingdom and France that by their action the German Government have created conditions (viz. an aggressive act of force against Poland threatening the independence of Poland) which calls for the implementation by the Governments of the United Kingdom and France of the undertaking to Poland to come to her assistance.

I am accordingly to inform Your Excellency that, unless the German Government are prepared to give His Majesty's Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government have suspended all aggressive action against Poland and are prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*): NEVILE HENDERSON.

19. Note handed to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs by the French Ambassador on September 1, 1939, at 10 p. m.

(Translation)

Berlin, September 1, 1939.

Your Excellency:

On the instructions of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs I have the honor to make the following communication.

Early this morning the German Chancellor issued a proclamation to the German Army which indicated clearly that he was about to attack Poland.

Information which has reached the French Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom indicates that German troops have crossed the Polish frontier and that attacks on Polish towns are proceeding.

In these circumstances it appears to the Governments of France and the United Kingdom that by their action the German Government have created conditions (viz. an aggressive act of force against Poland threatening the independence of Poland) which calls for the implementation by the Governments of France and the United Kingdom of the undertaking to Poland to come to her assistance.

I am accordingly to inform Your Excellency that, unless the German Government are prepared to give the French Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government have suspended all aggressive action against Poland and are prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, the French Government will without hesitation fulfill their obligation to Poland.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*): COULONDRE.

20. Communication handed to the German Foreign Office by the Italian Ambassador on the morning of September 2, 1939.

(Translation)

For your information Italy communicates to you, naturally leaving every decision to the Führer, that she is still in a position to obtain the consent of France, England and Poland to a conference on the following basis:

1. An armistice, leaving the armies where they now are;
2. The calling of a conference within two or three days;
3. A solution of the Polish-German conflict, which, as matters lie today, would certainly be favorable to Germany.

This idea, which originated with the Duce, is today particularly advocated by France.

21. Information from the Havas News Agency on September 2, 1939

(Translation)

The French Government as well as several other Governments have been informed of an Italian proposal for a settlement of the European difficulties. After discussing the proposal the French Government gave a reply in the affirmative.

22. Extract from a Declaration made by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the House of Lords on the afternoon of September 2, 1939*

". . . . . Up to the present no reply has been received to the warning message delivered to Germany last night.

It was possible that delay had been due to proposals put forward by the Italian Government that hostilities should cease and that there would be immediately a conference between Great Britain, France, Poland, Germany and Italy.

The British Government would not find it possible to take part in a conference when Poland was being subjected to invasion and her towns were under bombardment and Danzig had been made the subject of unilateral settlement by force. . . ."

23. Note handed to the German Foreign Office by the British Ambassador on September 3, 1939, at 9 a. m.

September 3, 1939.

Your Excellency:

In the communication which I had the honor to make to you on September 1st I informed you on the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that, unless the German Government were prepared to give His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom satisfactory assurances that the German Government had suspended all aggressive action against Poland and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland.

Although this communication was made more than twenty-four hours ago, no reply has been received, but German attacks upon Poland have been continued and intensified. I have accordingly the honor to inform you that, unless not later than 11 a. m. British Summer Time today, September 3rd, satisfactory assurance to the above

*) According to the wording appearing in "The Observer" of September 3, 1939. A similar declaration was made at the same time by the British Prime Minister in the House of Commons.

effect has been given by the German Government and has reached His Majesty's Government in London, a state of war will exist between the two countries as from that hour.

I avail myself of this opportunity . . . .

(*Signed*): NEVILE HENDERSON.

24. Note from the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs handed to the German Chargé d'Affaires in London on September 3, 1939, at 11:15 a. m.

September 3, 1939.

Sir:

On September 1st H. M. Ambassador in Berlin acting upon my instructions informed the same Government that unless they were prepared to give H. M. Government in the United Kingdom satisfactory assurances that the German Government have suspended all aggressive actions against Poland and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, H. M. Government in the United Kingdom would without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland.

At 9 a. m. this morning H. M. Ambassador in Berlin acting upon my instructions informed the German Government that unless not later than 11 a. m. British summer time, today, September 3rd, satisfactory assurance to the above effect has been given by the German Government and has reached H. M. Government in London a state of war would exist between the two countries as from that hour.

No such assurances having been received I have the honor to inform you that a state of war exists between the two countries as from 11 a. m. today, September 3rd.

I have the honor . . . .

(*Signed*): HALIFAX.

25. Memorandum from the German Government handed to the British Ambassador by the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, September 3, 1939, at 11:30 a. m.

(Translation)

The Reich Government acknowledges receipt of the British Government's ultimatum of September 3, 1939, to which the Reich Government has the honor to reply as follows:

(1) The Reich Government and the German people refuse to be handed, to accept and, still less, to comply with demands amounting to an ultimatum made by the British Government.

(2) For many months past a state of war has actually prevailed along our eastern border. Ever since the Treaty of Versailles rent Germany in two, all subsequent German Governments were denied any peaceful settlement. Since 1933, the National Socialist Government have also tried again and again by way of peaceful negotiations to do away with the worst oppression and violations of law perpetrated by that treaty. Primarily it has been the British Government who by their intransigent attitude have frustrated any practical revision. Had it not been for the interference on the part of the British Government, a reasonable solution, doing justice to either party, would undoubtedly have been arrived at between Germany and Poland, a fact which the Reich Government and the German people are convinced of. For Germany had no intention of destroying Poland, nor did she ever demand Poland's destruction. All that the Reich demanded was the revision of those articles in the Treaty of Versailles which sensible statesmen of all nations, already when the treaty was drawn up, termed unbearable for any length of time — unbearable both for a great nation and for the entire political and economic interest of Eastern Europe, and therefore impossible. Even British statesmen declared specifically that the terms which Germany was forced to accept in the East held the seed of future wars. To do away with this danger has been the desire of every German Government, and in particular the aim of the new National Socialist Government of the German people. The policy of the British Cabinet is to blame for the fact that a peaceful revision has not been reached.

(3) The British Government — an unprecedented occurrence in history — has given Poland full power with regard to any action against Germany which she might intend to undertake. The British Government gave the Polish Government the assurance of their military support in any circumstances, in case Germany should commence hostilities in reply to any provocation or attack. Thereupon Polish acts of terror against Germans domiciled in the districts torn from Germany immediately assumed intolerable proportions. The treatment to which the Free City of Danzig was subjected was in contravention to all legal provisions; it was first threatened with economic ruin and submitted to customs restrictions, and finally encircled by military forces and throttled by transport restrictions. Every one of these infringements of the Danzig Statute was fully known to, and approved by, the British Government, and backed by the blank cheque given to Poland. The German Government, although greatly distressed by the sufferings of the German minority subjected to atrocities and inhuman treatment by the Poles, nevertheless looked on in patience for five months without once undertaking even the slightest aggressive action of a similar nature against Poland.

Germany merely warned Poland that these actions would not be tolerated in the long run and that she was determined, in the event of no other help forthcoming for the population concerned, to take the matter in hand herself. The British Government was fully aware of all that was going on. It would have been an easy matter for them to use their great influence in Warsaw to exhort those in authority to conform to the laws of justice and humanity, and to fulfill their existing obligations. The British Government did not see fit to do anything of the kind. On the contrary, by constantly stressing the fact of their duty to assist Poland under all circumstances, they clearly encouraged Poland to continue in her criminal attitude which was endangering the peace of Europe. On these lines the British Government rejected the proposal made by Mussolini which still might have saved the peace of Europe, although the Reich Government had expressed their readiness to accept such proposal. The British Government are thus responsible for all the misery and suffering that has overtaken now, or is about to overtake, so many peoples.

(4) Now that all attempts to find and settle on a peaceful solution have been frustrated owing to the intransigent attitude of the Polish Government as shielded by Great Britain; now that for many months already conditions similar to civil war on the eastern frontiers of the Reich have gradually, — without any objection on the part of the British Government—, assumed the character of open attacks on Reich territory, the Reich Government have decided to put an end to the continued menace, at first from outside, but later also at home, against the peace of the German nation, a situation no Great Power can be expected to bear with. In order to defend the peace, the security and the honor of the German Reich, the Reich Government have decided to resort to the only means now left to them, since the Governments of the Democracies have wantonly frustrated all other possibilities of a revision. They have replied to the last Polish attacks threatening Reich territory with similar measures. The Reich Government is not willing, on account of any British intentions or obligations, to tolerate in the East of the Reich conditions similar to those prevailing in the British Protectorate of Palestine. The German people, however, is certainly not willing to submit to ill-treatment by Poland.

(5) The Reich Government therefore reject any attempt to force Germany, by an ultimative demand, to withdraw her troops, called up for the purpose of protecting the Reich, and thus to put up once more with the former unrest and injustice. The threat that war would otherwise be waged against Germany coincides with the intentions, for many years proclaimed, of numerous British politicians. Innumerable times the Reich

Government and the German people have assured the British people of their desire for an understanding and even close friendship with them. If the British Government have hitherto rejected these offers and now reply to them with an open threat of war, the responsibility for this lies not with the German nation and its Government, but exclusively with the British Cabinet, especially with those men who for years have preached the destruction and extermination of the German people. The German people and the German Government do not intend, as does Great Britain, to rule the world, but they are determined to defend their own freedom, their independence and very life. We take note of the intentions made known to us by Mr. King Hall on behalf of the British Government, to deal the German nation a still more crushing blow than did the Treaty of Versailles and shall therefore reply to any act of aggression on the part of Great Britain with the same weapons and in the same way.

Berlin, September 3, 1939.

26. Note handed to the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs by the French Ambassador on September 3, 1939, at 12:20 p. m.

(Translation)

Berlin, September 3, 1939.

Your Excellency:

As I received no satisfactory reply from the Reich Government at noon on September 3rd to the Note which I handed to you on September 1st at 10 p. m. I have the honor of making the following communication to you on behalf of my Government:

The Government of the French Republic consider it their duty to remind you for the last time of the grave responsibility which the Reich Government incurred when they opened hostilities against Poland without a declaration of war and did not adopt the proposal of the Government of the French Republic and that of His Britannic Majesty to desist from every aggressive action against Poland and to declare themselves ready immediately to withdraw their troops from Polish territory.

The Government of the Republic therefore have the honor of informing the Reich Government that they see themselves in duty bound to fulfill the contractual obligations, from today, September 3rd, 5 p.m. onwards, which they have entered into with Poland and with which the German Government are acquainted.

Permit me . . . .

(*Signed*): COULONDRE.

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